

MOVE TO BE STRONG!



VON SMART NEWSLETTER



JUNE 2023

June is a month to celebrate aging and older adults in our community. It is a month to encourage inclusivity and promote age friendly communities.

What can I do to celebrate Seniors Month, as an older adult?

1. Stay active – find exercise programs and services that meet your interests and fitness goals. Reach out to your local Active Aging Centre to find out about the programs they offer and how to get involved.
2. Stay connected – as we age it becomes easier to become more socially isolated so be sure to stay connected with friends, family and the community. Perhaps get involved with a group that establishes a standing date and time to meet for a coffee or a book club reading.
3. Stay safe – get informed about your health status and what you can do to remain as healthy as possible. Reach out to community supports, like VON SMART fall prevention exercise programs. Protect yourself against financial scams and fraud.

What can I do to celebrate Seniors Month, as someone that knows an older adult?

1. Stay active – locate services and programs that can assist older adults in maintaining their independence.
2. Stay connected – Check in with a loved one that you have not spoken to in a while.
3. Stay safe – Contribute to age friendly communities by making sure that sidewalks are clean and clear of tripping hazards. Help our older adults enjoy the outdoors worry-free!

The VON SMART Program

Helping to keep our community dwelling older adults active, engaged and free from falls!

For more information about SMART exercise classes and fall prevention workshops please contact:

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Resources for Older Adults in the Community

30% of older adults are at risk of social isolation. Luckily for us there are many programs and resources available for older adults to minimize the risk of social isolation.

Chatham-Kent

Chatham-Kent is an age-friendly community that offers retirees and seniors a safe and active lifestyle. There are 11 adult activity centres across Chatham-Kent for seniors to socialize, visit with old and new, develop new interests and engage in favourite hobbies. There are many recreational programs for adults, as well as programs and services specifically for seniors. If you are looking for other ways to get involved, many organizations also have opportunities to volunteer locally.

Visit for more information: <https://www.chatham-kent.ca/livingck/livinginck/dailylife/Pages/Seniors.aspx>

Windsor-Essex

Life After Fifty (LAF) is a charitable, non-for-profit, organization and designated Seniors Active Living Centre providing activities for adults fifty and over. We have been a consistent source of seniors programming in our community since 1962. Regular weekly programs fall under three core categories: Health and Wellness ("Be fit!"), Skills Development and Hobbies ("Be well!"), and Personal Connections ("Be social!").

Visit for more information: <https://www.lifeafterfifty.ca/> OR call: (519) 254-1108

Sarnia-Lambton

This website is brought to you by Age-Friendly Sarnia-Lambton, a project that started with a focus on age 55+ and has expanded to support active, healthy and engaged living for people through all life stages. It lists many of the services and supports available to residents of Sarnia and Lambton County. Including contacts for exercise and fall prevention programs, Seniors' Active Living Centres and clubs.

Visit the following link for more information: <https://www.agefriendlysarnialambton.ca/Services/Category/402458>

Meet Carol Our Participant Feature

*Carol reached out expressing interest in finding a way to engage in self-care and opportunities to participate in more exercise from the comfort of her home. VON SMART staff provided Carol with a tablet that included a variety of pre-recorded exercise sessions, narrated fall prevention videos and fun music to move to. **In***

Carol's words:



Good Morning Khrista

I cannot tell you what a difference this tablet has made in my life!!

I felt like I had lost myself in being a care giver to my husband & was well aware of the need for self-care but didn't seem to have the energy to take care of me.

Since getting the tablet I usually do one 7 days a week, first thing after my coffee!

Cannot believe how much more energy I have, feel so good & with making better choices food wise have also lost weight!! (I was comfort eating)

Not anymore!!! 😊

Love your monthly newsletters & the words on what exercise does is PERFECT.

Had to write them in my day planner!!

Thanks so much

Carol 😊

Did You Know?

<u>Number of persons aged 65 years and older</u> (July 1, 2022)	7,330,605
<u>Number of centenarians</u> (July 1, 2022)	13,485
<u>Life expectancy at 65</u> (2018 to 2020)	Males: 19.49 years Females: 22.19 years

Older Adults and Population Aging

With the rising population of older adults it is important we look back and reflect on why we celebrate the older adults in our community!

1. **They have helped us build what we have today.** The older adults of today helped build and shape the communities that we call home. Many making significant sacrifices for their families and communities.
2. **They contribute volunteer hours.** Not only were our older adults active in building our communities during their careers, they continue to volunteer their time in their years of retirement. Being leading contributors in the volunteer community.
3. **We learn through their stories.** Older adults have lived and learned . Through their stories of the best and worst times we can learn and grow as people from their wisdom.
4. **To fight ageism.** We need to change the narrative around aging from anti-aging to pro-aging. Ageism is a on going issue when it comes to older adults who can be unfairly discriminated against because of older age.

How can we celebrate the older adults in our lives?

1. Say thank you.
2. Strike up a conversation.
3. Write a letter of appreciation.
4. Nominate for a community award.
5. Take out for an activity or a meal.
6. Plan an event in their honor.
7. Celebrate their lives.



VON SMART Instructor Feature!



During the month of May our VON SMART instructors from Windsor-Essex, Chatham-Kent, and Sarnia Lambton came together for our annual team meeting!

We learned about the most up to date research in fall prevention, exercise and chronic disease, modifying exercises and creative ways to facilitate a safe and enjoyable class for our SMART participants.

As SMART instructors we strive to be the best that we can be to be able to provide our participants with the greatest experience and most effective movements and skills to prevent falls.

Individuals interested in joining a SMART class self-refer or be referred by their healthcare provider, family or friend. The program is fully funded, so there is no cost to the participant.

We hope to see you soon!

Let's
MOVE TO BE STRONG
TOGETHER!

Resources
McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

Immersive virtual reality: An innovative solution to support the well-being of older adults.

mcmasteroptimalaging.org



Many older adults face various challenges related to aging: social and geographic isolation, reduced mobility, physical and cognitive decline. Many researchers are interested in the promising role of technologies to address some of these challenges. Among all the technologies, immersive virtual reality is of particular interest.

What is immersive virtual reality? It is a technology that allows users to experience a computer-generated environment as if it were real. This technology uses a headset that follows the user's head movements, creating a realistic sense of presence in a virtual world. The 360-degree videos capture an entire scene, allowing the viewer to look in any direction. Immersive virtual reality using 360-degree videos offers a powerful and engaging experience that can transport users to different environments and stimulate their senses.

Numerous studies show that immersive virtual reality positively influences cognitive function and memory, pain management, anxiety and depression in people of all ages and promotes greater social interaction and overall well-being. In addition, this technology is accessible, affordable, customizable and easy to use. But what does the research tell us specifically about older adults?

What the research tells us

A scoping review of 10 studies examined the effectiveness of immersive virtual reality using 360-degree videos on the well-being of older adults aged 68-87, with and without cognitive impairment. Interventions were offered to older adults living in the community and in care facilities, individually and in groups. Participants could be seated or reclined in chairs and wore lightweight headphones. The content of the 360-degree videos showed mostly natural scenes and tourist locations.

Numerous behavioural and psychological outcomes were assessed, such as anxiety, apathy, loneliness, depression, social engagement, quality of life and emotions.

Positive results...

Although the studies were conducted on a small number of participants, the results show that this technology has a positive effect on well-being, particularly on apathy and emotions.

By providing older adults with new experiences, immersive virtual reality allows them to feel more engaged and motivated, which can contribute to a sense of purpose and maximize well-being.

The majority of participants found the experience enjoyable and emotionally empowering.

... and mixed results

The effects on other behavioral and psychological factors such as anxiety, quality of life, depression and loneliness remain uncertain according to this review, because they have not been sufficiently studied or have shown mixed results.

Is virtual reality for you?

Immersive environments can allow you to travel, visit museums, fly a plane, practice your golf swing, perform exercises in a controlled environment, as well as recall memories and generate positive emotions.

Yet, a few study participants experienced symptoms similar to those caused by motion sickness: disorientation, dizziness, headache, nausea. Before you embark on immersive experiences, talk to your health professional to make sure this technology is right for you.

If you have the green light, ask whether your nursing home has access to virtual reality equipment and access to 360-degree video libraries. Also, many public libraries offer activities to explore virtual reality, and some have the equipment available to their members. Get informed and have fun!

VON Updates

There will be no classes JULY 3rd, 2023



VON SMART Exercise & Fall Prevention

Windsor-Essex | Chatham-Kent | Sarnia-Lambton

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